

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 /043 W

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R 201538Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2130

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T OUAGADOUGOU 2557

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR MILI PINR UV ML

SUBJECT: VOLTAN CONCERN OVER SOVIET INTENTIONS IN MALI

REF: STATE 205468

1. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT LAMIZANA EVENING AUG 19 TO DELIVER MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY TRANSMITTED STATE 190919, AS WELL AS FRENCH TEXT OF SECRETARY'S SPEECH TO URBAN LEAGUE. LAMIZANA SAID THAT HE HAD READ EXCERPTS OF SECRETARY'S SPEECH BUT WAS MOST INTERESTED IN SEEING ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AS I FULLY EXPECT (OUAGA 2400), LAMIZANA THEN LAUNCHED INTO LONG DIATRIBE ON EVIL ACTIVITIES OF USSR IN MALI. HE SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT USG WAS AT LAST TAKING ACTIVE INTEREST IN EVENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN AND THAT HE HAD DEEPLY REGRETTEED THAT US HAD NOT BEEN IN POSITION TO DO MORE IN ANGOLA WHERE SOVIETS NOW HAD A SOLID BASE. BUT, AT SAME TIME, USG COULD NOT IGNORE WHAT WAS GOING ON IN WEST AFRICA. HE REFERRED TO RECENT VISIT BY SOVIET DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER SOKOLOV TO MALI AND SAID THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED NEWS THAT DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OF EAST GERMAN ARMY WAS NOW IN BAMAKO. ACCORDING TO HIS SOURCES, MALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER DOUKARA (PRESIDENT REFERRED TO HIM DURING ENTIRE CONVERSATION AS SECRET

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"KISSIMA") WAS IN PROCESS OF STRENGTHENING AND MODERNIZING

MALIAN ARMED FORCES. PRESIDENT WONDERED WHAT COULD BE THE PURPOSE OF SUCH A MOVE AND HAD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT UPPER VOLTA WAS LIKELY TO BE THE MAIN TARGET OF FUTURE MALIAN MILITARY ADVENTURES. HE ASKED WHETHER USG HAD ANY INFORMATION WHICH COULD THROW SOME LIGHT ON MALIAN INTENTIONS AND ON SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN MALI.

3. I TOLD LAMIZANA THAT FINANCE MINISTER KALMOGO HAD EARLIER MENTIONED TO ME GOUV'S CONCERN ON THIS QUESTION. AS A RESULT, I HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED BY DEPT TO GIVE HIM WHAT LITTLE WE HAD ON SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN MALI. I THEN DISCLOSED TO HIM INFO CONTAINED PARAS 2 TO 7 REFTEL. LAMIZANA APPEARED TO BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO MALIAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE, BUT I HAD IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS NOT OVERLY IMPRESSED BY OUR CONTRADICTION. HE THANKED ME BUT HINTED THAT THERA WAS A LOT MORE GOING ON IN MALI.

4. PRESIDENT THEN SAID THAT MAIN PROBLEM WAS THAT MOUSSA (MOUSSA TRAORE, PRESIDENT OF MALI) WAS UNABLE TO CONTROL SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION, SOME OF WHOM WERE COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS. KISSIMA (DOUKARA) WAS PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS BECAUSE HE WAS ABLE AND EXTREMELY AMBITIOUS. HE WAS EXPECTED TO VISIT OUAGA IN NEAR FUTURE AND WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PROCLAIM THAT BORDER DISPUTE WAS NOW SETTLED. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE, AND UPPER VOLTA WOULD NOT CONSIDER THE MATTER SETTLED UNTIL THE BORDER HAD BEEN MARKED ON ITS ENTIRE LENGTH IN THE DISPUTED ZONE. MALI HAD REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH LOME MEDIATION COMMISSION. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE VOLTAN SIDE OF THE BORDER HAD BEEN COMPLETED BUT MALI HAD NOT YET GIVEN ITS AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SAME THING TO BE DONE ON ITS SIDE OF BORDER. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, GOUV COULD ONLY CONCLUDE THAT MALI, WITH SOVIET ENCOURAGEMENT, INTENDED TO ATTACK AGAIN AS SOON AS UPPER VOLTA HAD PUT ITS GUARD DOWN.

5. AND YET, PRESIDENT CONTINUED, UPPER VOLTA COULD NOT AFFORD TO MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT MILITARY POSTURE. HE HAD ESTIMATED THAT, SINCE DEC 74, THE MILITARY EFFORT WHICH HAD BEEN REQUIRED HAD COST UPPER VOLTA, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, SOME 24 MILLION DOLS. THE GOVERNMENT HAD DIFFICULTY IN

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CLOTHING, FEEDING AND HOUSING ALL ITS TROOPS. AND THIS AT A TIME WHEN ALL OF UPPER VOLTA'S EFFORTS AND RESOURCES SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. OBVIOUSLY THIS SITUATION COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO LAST MUCH LONGER.

6. PRESIDENT THEN SAID THAT HE DEEPLY APPRECIATED WHAT USG HAD DONE FOR UPPER VOLTA ESPECIALLY DURING THE DROUGHT BUT HE THOUGHT IT WAS WRONG FOR USG TO

THINK THAT ITS INTEREST IN UPPER VOLTA WAS RESTRICTED TO HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS. THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT CLOSE ITS EYES TO WHAT THE SOVIETS WERE DOING IN WEST AFRICA. IN SPITE OF ALL THE "NONSENSE" ABOUT NON-ALIGNMENT, SOME EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES WERE PRO-WEST AND OTHER WERE PRO-COMMUNIST. UPPER VOLTA WAS PRO-WEST, ITS SOCIETY WAS DEEPLY CONSERVATIVE, DEEPLY ATTACHED TO DEMOCRACY AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. THERE WERE EXACTLY 20 PERSONS IN UPPER VOLTA WHO COULD BE CONSIDERED AS COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS, AND THEY WERE ALL PERSONALLY KNOWN TO THE PRESIDENT. ONE ONLY HAD TO LOOK AT THE FREEDOM ENJOYED BY THE VOLTAN POPULATION AND COMPARE IT TO THE SITUATION PREVAILING IN MALI TO REALIZE THE DIFFERENT ORIENTATION OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. WHEN MALI HAD ATTACKED UPPER VOLTA IN DECEMBER 1974, THE PRESIDENT HAD ASKED FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE AND HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN. HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT THE U.S. DECISION TO MAINTAIN STRICT NEUTRALITY IN THE BORDER DISPUTE HAD BEEN DETRIMENTAL TO U.S. INTERESTS IN WEST AFRICA, AS HE SAW THEM. HE HOPED THAT, IF UPPER VOLTA FOUND ITSELF IN DANGER ONCE MORE, THE UNITED STATES WOULD TAKE A BROADER VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN WEST AFRICA AND WOULD NOT EXCLUDE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS IN FORMULATING ITS POLICY.

7. I THANKED PRESIDENT FOR HIS FULL AND FRANK PRESENTATION AND TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO THE DEPT.

8. COMMENT: OUR CONVERSATION LASTED ALMOST ONE AND A HALF HOURS. OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED BY SEPTELS. PRESIDENT APPEARED TO BE GENUINELY WORRIED ABOUT SITUATION IN MALI. SINCE HE IS NOT THE TYPE TO PANIC, THERE MUST
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BE SOME GOOD REASON FOR HIS CONCERN. PERHAPS EMBASSY BAMAKO COULD SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS POINT, INCLUDING ALLEGED VISIT OF EAST GERMAN DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF.
GRAHAM

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NNN

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